

THE POLITICS OF GENDER AND VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY OF A MEXICAN
FEMALE SENATOR AND A LAW FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Violence against Mexican women is not a new subject. Disappearances and murdered women in the border town of Cd. Juarez and throughout the country are reported in the news headlines every day. Between 1999 and 2005 more than 6,000 women and girls were murdered, an average of 1,000 murdered women every year. The majority of the deaths result from violence within their household (Mexico, 2009). The rate of violence is not isolated to border towns. The *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Geografía* (National Institute of Statistics and Geography/INEGI) reports that 67% of Mexican women aged 15 years of age and older have been victims of violence. At the same time, the political representation of Mexican women has increased over the years. The rate of Mexican women who hold national political positions is 35%, higher than most of its neighboring countries (Women, 2013). This thesis will focus on the representation of women at the federal level. Even though political representation numbers are significant compared to other nation states, Mexico ranks high in the Gender Inequality Index measured by the United Nations, signifying that Mexican women hold a poor position in their society. The relationship between the high incidence of violence against women and the number of elected female politicians is contradictory. This thesis will look at the effectiveness of Mexican female politicians in creating policies against violence and aims to answer these questions: 1) To what extent do women politicians follow party lines and to what extent do women politicians have autonomous agendas? 2) To what extent do women politicians get to

participate in policy making and what role do quotas play in female participation? 3) Are Mexican female politicians writing and advocating effective legislation against violence? 4) What are some of the challenges and barriers in passing legislation against violence? I approach these questions using quantitative and qualitative methods through two case studies, data analysis, and narrative reports. I frame these questions around representation and critical mass theory. The first case study analyzes whether female PRI Senator Diva Gastelum represents her constituents through descriptive or substantives representation. The second case study analyzes the *Ley General de Victimias* (General Law for Victims/LGV), a piece of victim's assistance legislation and the role of female politicians. This inquiry will help the reader understand whether a relationship between Mexican female politicians and policies created against violence exists.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.
Approved: Jana Everett

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Dante, my son and reason to always strive to become a better person. To David, my partner. To my parents Daniel and Claudia for your continuous love, support, and encouragement. And to my brothers Pablo, Miguel, and Jose.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Theory of Representation.....	3
	Female Quotas in the Political System.....	6
	Literature Review.....	8
	Thesis Methodology.....	11
	Thesis Parameters.....	13
	Thesis Outline.....	14
II.	REPRESENTATION THEORIES AND QUOTAS.....	15
	Representation Theory.....	15
	Critical Mass Theory.....	17
	The Role of Quotas.....	20
III.	BACKGROUND.....	23
	Mexican Women’s Movement.....	23
	Gender Violence Background.....	32
	Mexican Political System.....	35
	The Role of Quotas in Mexican Politics.....	37
IV.	A FEMALE LEGISLATOR AND THE PROCESS OF A LAW.....	41
	Setting the Stage.....	41
	Case Study 1: A Female Legislator.....	44
	Case Study 2: The Process of a Law.....	49
	Challenges and Barriers.....	59
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	63
	Thesis Summary.....	63
	Recommendations.....	65
	Conclusion.....	66
	REFERENCES	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table

I. Gastelum Proposed Initiatives in the Legislature Sept 2009 – Apr 2012	48
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEAMEG	<i>Centro de Estudios para el Adelanto de las Mujeres y la Equidad de Genero</i> – Center for the Study of Women’s Advancement and Gender Equity
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
DEVAW	Declaration of Violence Against Women
DIF	<i>Desarrollo Integral de la Familia</i> - Integral Family Development
ENCUP	<i>Encuesta Nacional sobre Cultura Política y Practicas Ciudadanas</i> – National Survey on Political Culture and Practice of Citizenship
FUPDM	<i>Frente Único pro Derechos de la Mujer</i> – Sole Front for Women’s Rights
INEGI	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Geografía</i> – National Institute of Statistics and Geography
INMUJERES	<i>Instituto Nacional de la Mujer</i> – National Institute for Women
LGV	<i>Ley General de Victimas</i> – General Law for Victims
LGAMVLV	<i>Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia</i> – Law for General Access of Women for a Life Free from Violence
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ONMPRI	<i>Organización Nacional de Mujeres Priistas</i> – National Organization of PRI-Women
PAIMEF	<i>Programa de Apoyo a las Instancias de Mujeres en las Entidades Federativas</i> - Program to Support the State Level Institutes for Women

PAN	<i>Partido de Acción Nacional</i> – National Action Party
PGR	<i>Procuraduría General de la Republica</i> – Attorney General
PNA	<i>Partido Nacional Anti-reeleccionista</i> – National Anti-relection Party
PRD	<i>Partido de la Revolución Democrática</i> – Democratic Revolution Party
PRI	<i>Partido Revolucionario Institucional</i> – Institutional Revolutionary Party
PRONAM	<i>Programa Nacional de la Mujer</i> – National Women’s Program
PRONAVI	<i>Programa Nacional Contra la Violencia Intrafamiliar</i> – National Program Against Intra-Family Violence
SEP	<i>Secretaria de Educación Publica</i> – Secretary of Public Education
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Violence against Mexican women is not a new subject. Disappearances and murdered women in the border town of Cd. Juarez and throughout the country are reported in the news headlines every day. On average 1,000 Mexican women are murdered every year. In other words, one Mexican woman is killed every eight hours with the overwhelming majority of the deaths resulting from violence within their household (Mexico, 2009). What we do not often hear is the reality of the country as a whole. The *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Geografía* (National Institute of Statistics and Geography/INEGI) reports that 67% of Mexican women aged 15 years of age and older have been victims of violence. In other words 7 out of 10 Mexican women have been victims of violence (CEAMEG, 2012). Violence in this thesis is defined using the United Nations definition from the Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Article 2,

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. (Declaration, 1993, ¶. 15)

While violence in Mexico occurs in different places within the community, at school, at work, at home, partner and domestic violence have the highest incidence. The high incidence of violence against Mexican women shows a stark contrast when women have advanced in their socioeconomic status, as more than twenty five percent of Mexican households are headed by

women. In the labor force, the number of women working outside the home has increased to 53.5%, higher than their male counterparts at 46.5%. In education, Mexican women are reaching higher education attainment levels coming closer in parity with men, with women at 27% and men at 28%. At the same time, women continue to face gender inequalities in the work place as Mexican women can only expect to be paid at 75% for the same work as men (INEGI, 2012).

Mexican women are faced with gender inequality in different aspects of their lives, specifically in the area of violence. However, the political participation of women has increased over the years. The rate of Mexican women who hold national political positions is 35%, higher than most of its neighboring countries (Women, 2013). This thesis will focus on the representation of women at the federal level. The federal level has the highest representation of women occupying legislative positions in the LXII legislative session. In 2012, the National Bicameral Congress, which includes the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, has more elected women than ever. The Senate elected 42 female senators out of its 128 members, which translates to about 32% of female members at the Senate level. The Chamber of Deputies elected 184 female deputies out of its 500 members, translating to 37% of female members at the Chamber of Deputies level. The relationship between the high incidence of violence against women and the number of elected female politicians is contradictory when Mexico ranks high in gender inequality. In the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, Mexico ranks 57th out of 187 countries, which

reflects women's disadvantage in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. The index shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. The health dimension is measured by two indicators: maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent fertility rate. The empowerment dimension is measured by: the share of parliamentary seats held by each sex and by secondary and higher education attainment levels. The labour dimension is measured by women's participation in the work force. (Gender, 2012, ¶. 4)

Considering that the population of Mexico is 51% female, with 51% of those eligible voters registered to vote (INEGI, 2012), the rate of female politicians at the federal level, and the high incidence of violence against women, brings a few questions regarding the effectiveness of Mexican female politicians and the policies they support. To analyze the effectiveness and the role Mexican female politicians play in politics, this thesis focuses on four questions:

1. To what extent do women politicians follow party lines and to what extent do women politicians have autonomous agendas?
2. To what extent do women politicians get to participate in policy making and what role do quotas play in female participation?
3. Are Mexican female politicians writing and advocating effective legislation against violence?
4. What are some of the challenges and barriers in passing legislation against violence?

This thesis seeks to answer some of these questions and identify barriers and areas for potential improvement. This inquiry is significant because it will allow the reader to understand the current position of Mexican women. In addition, it will contribute to the analysis of the effectiveness of female politicians in creating policies against violence, as well as identify some barriers for effective legislation against violence.

Theory of Representation

Political participation is influenced by gender. Female political representation has been studied by many scholars, but two of the benchmark studies include Hanna Pitkin's *The Concept of Representation* (1967) and Anne Phillips's *The Politics of Presence* (1995). Women's political representation is significant to analyze as it is critical to take into account how political participation is influenced by gender. Scholars such as Henderson (2010) note that "political institutions were created and largely run by men for centuries, and, as a result, many women's concerns have either, been ignored, forgotten, or inadequately addressed" (p. 7). Pitkin (1967) is

central for her work with representation theory. In this context, representation is defined as “popular representation, and to be linked with the idea of self-government, of every man’s right to have a say in what happens to him” (Pitkin, 1967, p. 3). A progression in history extends the words a “man’s right” to now include women and minorities.

Two main aspects to the concept of political representation exist: 1) Descriptive representation and 2) Substantive representation. Descriptive representation refers to a representative that is elected in a way that “mirrors” his/her constituency to “stand in” for them in government. In other words, when a female representative is elected, she is said to “mirror” the same qualities as her constituents. In theory there would also be a proportional amount of female representatives in politics to mirror the overall constituent population. Substantive representation refers to a representative that “acts for” its constituents. In this case a female politician would act in the interest and support of “women’s issues” and needs. The differentiation between “descriptive” and “substantive” representation speaks to the influence of female politicians and the role they play in the legislature. For example, a female politician might be elected by female constituents of similar qualities through descriptive representation. However, she might have her own political agenda that does not necessarily reflect the needs of the constituents that elected her. In the case of substantive representation, a female politician would act and present the issues that would benefit her female constituents. This proposition begs the question of whether all women constituents can be said to have common interest and what these interests might be. And although “a certain level of abstraction women can be said to have some interest in common” one cannot generalize that all women share and support universal issues based on gender, as a wide spectrum of views and diversity within women exist (Molyneux, 1985, p. 231). At the same time the issue of women with conservative views and the

role of substantive representation is raised by Celis and Childs (2012) as they argue that the conversation has to be widened to include not only feminist liberal women but also their conservative counterparts. Scholars continue to wrestle with these issues, but these questions go beyond the scope of this thesis. Women's issues include an array of topics that directly affect a woman's well-being from equality with men, health, labor force, and family relations. This thesis defines "women's issues" to be understood as strategic gender interest. Strategic interest are interest that women "may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender attributes" and want to change "from the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist" (Molyneux, 1985, p. 232). In this case I look at the strategic objectives to overcome violence against women through the role of a female politician in Congress.

Anne Phillips (1995) contributes to the theory of representation as she analyzes the representation of minority groups, which includes women. She agrees with Pitkin that it is crucial for minorities to be represented by one of their own because they will often work for the important issues of their constituency. Phillips concedes that even if it would be more appropriate to have women represent other women in issues of sexuality, one must not dismiss that a man might be able to do the same if he ascribes to the same beliefs as a woman. She notes that too much focus has been put on the *differences* between groups and that often times that is what separates us from achieving similar goals. At the same time, Phillips argues that there needs to be an effective method to hold our representatives accountable for their work on our behalf as she notes that "when policies are worked out *for* rather than *with* a political excluded constituency, they are unlikely to engage with all relevant concerns" (p. 13). Phillips emphasizes that there needs to be a balanced democracy, where all groups not only vote but also call for

accountability in all aspects of society. She concludes that we should not have to choose between *either/or* in having our *ideas* or *political presence* in the legislature.

Overall, the study of women's political representation is a significant field of study. As Jensen (2008) highlights "apart from considerations of democracy and social justice as well as the most efficient use of human resources, female participation in politics, particularly at the highest level, is seen as important since it provides representation for another point of view" (p. 12). More in-depth theory will be addressed in Chapter II as Pitkin (1967) and Phillips (1995) have paved the way for current scholars to take the field further, as some scholars focus the theory of representation on Latin America and incorporate critical mass theory.

Female Quotas in the Political System

Quotas are generally understood as a proportional share of something in a system. There are three forms of quotas: 1) Voluntary Party Policy, 2) Law, and 3) Constitutional Amendment. In this case, quotas will be used and understood under the notions of a quota law. A quota law is a law that, among other things, "entails that women must constitute a certain number or percentage of the members of a body, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or a government. The quota system places the "burden of recruitment not on the individual woman, but on those who control the recruitment process" (What, 2010, ¶. 8). Quotas are vital in the political representation of women as they play a significant role in encouraging governments to include women in the political process. Quotas show just how access for women to the political system had to be institutionalized to encourage women's participation. The purpose of quotas is to encourage and promote women's participation in political parties by encouraging women to run for elected office, and reserve a specific number of seats or appointments only for women. Quotas, as a means to increase women's political participation,

were supported during the 1995 United Nations fourth world conference on women in China in which the Beijing Declaration was signed. The Beijing Declaration clearly states that the signees are committed to “the equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes; and the establishment or strengthening of mechanism at all levels for accountability to the world’s women” (Beijing, 2010, ¶. 36). Since the Beijing Declaration, quotas have been implemented in most of the world as “131 political parties, representing sixty-two countries, have instituted voluntary internal quotas” (Henderson, 2010, p. 15).

Mexico implemented quotas in 1996, following a 1990s international trend in which other Latin America countries passed quotas laws. By 2002, Mexico made it officially mandatory for all parties to follow quotas. In the current 2012 National Senate,

[P]olitical parties are required to guarantee that women constitute at least 40 percent of candidates. This applies to both lists of candidates for the PR election, and the candidates for the constituency elections. However, parties who democratically elect their candidates are exempt from the regulations - COFIPE, Article 219 (Mexico, 2012, ¶. 1)

Although quotas were implemented, no clear enforcement mechanism was established to make sure that political parties follow them and many loopholes to get around meeting quotas exist in the law. Initially, not all political parties were supporters of institutionalizing the quotas as the *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party/PAN) opposed them. While the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party/PRI) and *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Party of the Democratic Revolution/PRD) have “formally and explicitly instituted a quota system both within its internal party structure and its candidate list” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 180). Currently, each political party has implemented different levels of quotas within. The PRD leads with an internal quota of 50%, the PRI 30%, and the PAN “ruled

in 2000 that each pair of candidates (primary and substitute) must contain one woman” (Piscopo, 2011, p. 43). The role of quotas in the Mexican political system will be further discussed in Chapter II.

The literature on quotas is mixed as some scholars argue that “quotas are the only way to guarantee women access to power” while others oppose quotas saying that “it is discriminatory, devalues the political abilities of women, promotes under qualified women, and it is unnecessary because women who are qualified will rise on their own merit anyway” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 11). The argument regarding the role quotas play in substantive and descriptive representation, in which not all women support what are considered to be women’s issues will be addressed further in the theory section in Chapter II. Despite mixed literature and controversial views, “voluntary, internal gender quotas as well as legally mandated party quotas have been two of the most successful means for getting more women into office and are used in a total of ninety-two countries around the world” (Henderson, 2010, p. 15).

Literature Review

The current research of Mexican female political participation is fragmented. Some scholars focus specifically on the role religion plays in policymaking, the underrepresentation of women at different levels of the state system, the role gender plays in politics in the way women represent other women, the expression of Mexican culture in politics, and the role of quotas. Nevertheless, few studies focus on analyzing the types of policies passed by Mexican female politicians, much less, policy on gender violence. A central author in the literature of Mexican women in politics is Victoria Rodriguez (1998), one of the first scholars to research and publish her findings of the role contemporary Mexican female politicians’ play in the political system. She uses 1995 as a starting point to look at women’s participation in politics that includes a large

amount of historical information and data on the number of women in Congress. She documents the number that voted and how they voted, as well as look at the structure of political parties in Mexico. Her main focus is on understanding how Mexican female participation in politics has increased, how these women get elected, the role quotas play, and if political participation opens the door to many other improvements in Mexican women's lives. She further expands her research (2003) as she gives a broad history of the successes Mexican women have had in becoming more involved in politics, but also what type of political office they have been able to attain. This thesis seeks to expand on her research, past how women are elected, and focus specifically on a female legislator and analyzing the effectiveness of passing legislation against violence.

One of the recurring themes in the literature is where to place Mexican women in politics. Although Mexican women were involved in politics throughout history they were not recognized as citizens until 1953 when they gained the right to vote. Mercedes Barquett and Sandra Osses (2005) look at how citizenship has been "genderized" meaning that if you were a female you did not count or have a voice on what happens to you, and were instead counted through a male relative. The authors look at the relationship between democracy, gender equality, and the needs to place women in a place where they are considered "universal" citizens with political rights to voice opinions and make choices for themselves. In addition, Barquett and Osses analyze the role of Mexican women in the government as citizens, and how fragile democracies can be strengthened with the inclusion of women. Tine Davis (2011) also brings the perspective of how women view themselves and thus how female politicians are affected by their gender. Davis specifically looks at a right-wing female politician's life. He looks to see how agency manifests itself in this politician's life by following her party's claims and how they intersect on how she

sees herself. He explores how the female politician views of herself as a modern woman do not always match the way she votes or conducts herself. Davis shows how traditional values present themselves and shape voting in a way that perpetuates traditional values and roles. He also analyzes the interconnected role that gender has played in her life.

Jennifer Piscopo and Mala Htun (2010) study and research whether Mexican women politicians represent other women. They look closely at the trends in policy by the number of women elected and if a correlation of passing descriptive or substantive policies exists. In other words, are the policies initiated by women for women or do they pursue other interests. Piscopo (2011) shows that Mexican female politicians in fact do represent women by analyzing the types of policies presented and supported by women. Htun (2012) in her later research goes as far as stating that to produce changes in policy “autonomous mobilization of feminist in domestic and transnational context is the critical factor accounting for policy change” (p. 548). She goes further and notes that to bring policy change, ongoing activism and strong civil society groups are necessary. At the same time Par Zetterberg (2008) analyzes the role of creating quotas for women in political parties. Quotas state the number of women that should be participating in state government. He looks to see if these “quota women” encounter more resistance or problems versus the non-quota women, and if their role is actually an active one. He additionally looks at how women participate in political parties and the interplay between their political agendas and how they vote. Zetterberg finds that “quota women” do not encounter more resistance than other women in politics.

Viviane Brachet and Orlandina de Oliveria (2002) compile and explore the relationship between women and social policy. They look at the implications gender has in participating in the legislature and creating policy. The authors note that a perspective of gender must be taken

into account to be able to analyze social policy, as men and women have not had equal rights. The current literature does not specifically address the role of women in creating legislation against violence in Mexico; rather it seems to have summarized women's issues as a whole, with more focus on the representation part. This thesis aims to analyze and discuss the effectiveness of female Mexican politicians in creating policies against violence.

Thesis Methodology

The methods I will use to analyze the effectiveness of Mexican women in politics include qualitative methods in the form of case studies, and quantitative methods analyzing the results of surveys as well as look at statistical data on violence against women. Tellis (1997) argues that

Case studies are multi-perspectival analyses. This means that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them. This one aspect is a salient point in the characteristic that case studies possess. They give a voice to the powerless and voiceless. (¶. 7)

To set the context for both case studies I will first analyze empirical data results of the 2008 *Encuesta Nacional sobre Cultura Política y Practicas Ciudadanas* (National Survey on Political Culture and Practice of Citizenship/ENCUP) by the Special Program for Promoting Democratic Culture issued by the Mexican Ministry of the Interior. The national survey measures the views of Mexican citizens of politics and rate of involvement and participation. My focus will be on how Mexican citizens view the overall state of politics and the effectiveness of Congress passing legislation against violence.

Case study methodology allows me to look at the issues through different perspectives. The first case study will analyze the participation of National Senator Diva Gastelum during the LXI Legislature session (2009-2012), her role in Congress as a female politician, her participation rate, and engagement with issues that concern females. This case study will aim to

analyze the role women play in the legislature and look at the kind of agenda one female politician sets forth. The second case study will analyze the legislative process in Congress by following the history of the *Ley General de Victimias* (General Law for Victims), a piece of legislation that was passed in the LXI Legislative session and aims to provide services to victims of violence and crime. It includes information regarding who presented this initiative, its supporters, implementation, and current state and challenges. I will also look at Amnesty reports of individuals that have been victims of violence and how the state has responded to their needs without this piece of legislation. By reading and analyzing the Amnesty reports I anticipate to gain knowledge of how female victims of violence are perceived and treated when they make a claim against their abuser, as well as become informed of some of the present barriers in adopting these types of policies. The examination of these reports is directed to show the harsh reality of not passing legislation against violence.

The two case studies were chosen to illustrate the complexities of passing legislation against violence and to show the contrast between the work of a senator representing both her party and women's issues. The first case study highlighting the work of Senator Gastelum was chosen because she is a female Senator that plays a central and balancing act within her party. On one side Gastelum is tasked to represent her political party, the PRI a traditionally centric party, while at the same time she has also openly embraced her role as a female Senator fighting for women's equal rights. This balancing act will be analyzed to see how she balances both her roles as a strong PRI party leader but also as a female fighting for parity within the political system. Gastelum's background reflects that of a typical female representative that has worked her way up, holding secretarial and administrative positions before being able to reach a higher position within her party. She also comes from and represents the state of Sinaloa, which is one

of the few states that has pushed political parties to increase spending on training women for leadership positions. Currently, Sinaloa is the only state with the highest percentage of political funding for women in the country (Mexican, 2013). Since no law alone will stop violence from occurring one must analyze how issues around violence are being approached. The second case study following the *Ley General de Victimas* (General Law for Victims/LGV) initiative was chosen to show how Mexico is responding to violence and taking care of victims of violence. It was chosen to analyze specifically how legislators view violence and legislation, if political parties are working together with other groups, and to review if any women have been involved in the creation of legislation against violence. This initiative will be analyzed to learn more about the political process in passing legislation and measure the interest of those in Congress in how to respond to violence and take care of victims. These two case studies complement each other, the reader will get to see two sides in the process of passing legislation, one side on the views of a female Senator and the other side on what actually happens on the floor during the legislative process. With these two case studies, I demonstrate that Mexican female politicians are making a difference in passing legislation against violence, despite the complexities and barriers in passing legislation.

Thesis Parameters

This thesis will focus specifically on the role of one female politician from the PRI party in Congress, and one piece of legislation to assist victims of crime during the LXI Legislative session (2009-2012), recognizing that more in-depth research is needed. More research is needed on legislature presented against violence, the rate of female politicians writing and advocating for policies against violence, the participation of female politicians at different political levels, as well as many other factors that include regional differences, and the influence

of culture. I will not address ongoing initiatives to change language used in current violence legislation as a tendency to define the same term in different ways or lump together the same act is present. Nevertheless, I do address the role of combining various initiatives into one, as will be observed in the second case study in Chapter IV. Mexico, a democratic state, recognizes a separation of Church and State, conceding that religion does play an influential role in Mexican culture. I will not address the role of the Catholic Church. This thesis will look specifically at the issue of violence against women and political representation, recognizing that there are many equally important “women’s issues” that include parity in the work place and reproductive rights.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into five chapters: Chapter I is an overview of the thesis proposal which includes an introduction to the problem and research questions, as well as theory on women’s representation, background on quotas, a literature review of the current literature focusing on women’s representation in Mexico, thesis methodology, and thesis parameters. Chapter II further analyzes women’s political representation theory and some literature on quotas. Chapter III provides historical background of women’s rights in Mexico highlight women’s suffrage, and some historical background and norms on gender violence in Mexico. It addresses how the Mexican political system is structured, as well as some background on how Mexican political parties have implemented quotas. Chapter IV presents the two case studies and analyzes how each one can help answer the research questions. Finally, Chapter V is the conclusion and recommendations where I will show mixed results, Mexican female politicians are somewhat effective in creating policies against violence even though their representation numbers surpass critical mass theory. In addition, it highlights some of the barriers in implementing these policies and some recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REPRESENTATION THEORIES AND QUOTAS

Many theories examine women's political representation. This thesis will explore two of these theories: 1) Hanna Pitkin's representation theory, which describes what it means to be represented and by whom; and additions by Anne Phillips that explains how one is represented; and 2) Rosabeth Moss Kanter and Drude Dahlerup critical mass theory, which describes that a specific number of female representation is needed to affect change. Other scholars address how women's political is influenced by gender. Scholars like Henderson (2010) have noted that Western political systems have historically been created for men by men, leaving women and minorities out of the picture. In the next section I describe the relevance of women's political representation through representation theory and critical mass theory.

Representation Theory

Representation theory provides the theoretical context for studies which explore women's political representation. Pitkin (1967), a central scholar in representation theory, focuses on the concept of representation. She notes that representation as a concept is widely used with often little understanding of its actual meaning. In this context, representation is understood as "popular representation, and to be linked with the idea of self-government, of every man's right to have a say in what happens to him" (Pitkin, 1967, p. 3). This definition now includes a "man's right" to encompass women and minorities. Pitkin's representation theory includes "descriptive" and "substantive" representation. Descriptive representation as described by Pitkin refers to "the making present of something absent by resemblance or reflection" as in a legislator that is elected in a way that "mirrors" its constituency to "stand in" in government. In other words, when a female representative is elected, she is said to "mirror" or have the same qualities

as her constituents. In theory, using descriptive representation there should be a proportional amount of female representatives in politics to mirror the overall constituent population. In the case of Mexico, following the logic of descriptive representation, the number of female representatives that should be in politics should be half of it, since Mexico's population is 51 percent female. However, this does not necessarily mean that those women would act in support of women's issues.

On the other hand, substantive representation refers to an elected legislator that "acts for" its constituents, meaning that a female politician would act in pushing and voting toward issues that would benefit women. Pitkin points out how with this type of representation the legislator should not take "excessive risk" but, at the same time, should not make "self-sacrifice" gestures and should act as if they will eventually have to justify their actions. This distinction speaks to the influence of female politicians and the role they play in creating legislation. For example, applying Pitkin's concept of descriptive representation, a female politician might be elected by female constituents of similar qualities. However, this female politician might have her own political agenda that does not necessarily reflect the needs of her female constituents. Applying Pitkin's concept of substantive representation, a female politician would act in support of the issues that would benefit her female constituents.

Anne Phillips (1995) contributes to the theory of representation as she adds the spectrum of representation of minority groups. She agrees with Pitkin that it is important for minorities to be represented by someone in their own group, because often they will work for the essential issues of their constituency. She concedes that even if it would be more appropriate to have women represent women in issues of sexuality, one must not dismiss that a man might be able to do the same if he ascribes to the same beliefs as a woman. She notes that too much focus has

been put on the *differences* between groups and that often times that is what separates us from achieving similar goals. At the same time, she argues that there needs to be operating methods so that we hold our representatives accountable for their work on our behalf. She notes that “when policies are worked out *for* rather than *with* a political excluded constituency, they are unlikely to engage with all relevant concerns” (p. 13). In other words, in order for legislation to be effective, a representative must work together with their constituency for a common goal, rather than impose policies on them later on. Phillips emphasizes the need of a balanced democracy, where all groups not only vote, but also call for accountability in all aspects of society. She notes that we should not have to choose between *either/or* in having our *ideas* or *political presence* in the legislature. Phillips stresses the importance of not only holding our representatives accountable for the way they represent us, but also hold ourselves accountable on the way that we as a society allow inequalities to continue and what we do every day to support that.

Critical Mass Theory

Critical mass theory by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1993) and Drude Dahlerup (2006) further contribute to the study of women’s political representation by adding another dimension. Critical mass theory states that in order for women to make a difference in legislation, their participation numbers must grow considerably. As “only as their numbers increase, will women be able to work more effectively together to promote women-friendly policy change and to influence their male colleagues to accept and approve legislation promoting women’s concerns” (Childs & Krook, 2008, p. 725). Dahlerup identifies 30% as the number that women need to occupy in political office to make a significant difference in legislation. She concedes that 30 is just a number and that other factors like “societal attitudes” and “critical acts” can further bring

change (Childs & Krook, 2008). Literature on critical mass theory is mixed; some scholars argue that increasing the numbers of female legislators in fact does make a difference while others argue that it does not. Henderson's (2010) research "has pointed to the fact that women often must reach a critical mass before they are not only able to effect change for women" but that these female politicians must also be interested in bringing change to women's issues (p. 27). However, other scholars like Childs and Krook (2008) present the findings from Carrol's 2001 study where she shows that "an increase in the proportion of women elected actually decreases the likelihood that individual female legislators will act on behalf of women as a group" (p. 725). Carrol's study points to the need for further research in women's political representation as to what other factors might be involved in representation. Overall, the study of women's political representation is significant because "apart from considerations of democracy and social justice as well as the most efficient use of human resources, female participation in politics, particularly at the highest level is seen as important since it provides representation for another point of view" (Jensen, 2008, p. 12). In the following section, current scholars take the field further as Htun (2010, 2012), Piscopo (2010, 2011), and Rodriguez (1998, 2003) focus specifically on Latin America.

The political representation of Latin American women is rising. Rodriguez's (2003) research on Mexico points out that "the goal for Mexican women is to reach the 'critical mass' that will allow them to advance their position and that of all women in Mexican society" (p. 191). Rodriguez notes that even though women have gained more political seats at the federal level, more work still needs to be done at the state and local levels, as representation at these levels is still low. However, she is confident that Mexican women are going in the right direction as they demand equal rights for participation and have been able to work together for

common goals, despite their different party affiliations. Htun and Piscopo have taken descriptive and substantive representation in their research as they focus on Latin America. Their extensive research has found that the number of women in politics is increasing, but that quotas in fact have more effect in placing women in legislator positions than economic development or other socioeconomic factors (Htun & Piscopo, 2010). They have found that Latin American female politicians, in general, occupy positions in politics that are “less powerful” or areas of “soft” policy. In other words, male politicians continue to occupy the political positions that garner more power for change like committees that are in charge of dispensing federal funds. While women occupy the committees dealing with social issues like family relations and health. This trend of women in “soft” committees is true around the world (Equality, 2008). Keeping women on these committees enforces the stereotype that women are not capable of leadership in other fields like economics or government, furthering women from reaching parity with men in all fields. Not having women in “hard” committees also limits women’s “voices and perspectives heard in determining financial priorities and shaping national agendas” (Equality, 2008, p. 65). Htun and Piscopo (2010) found that “inclusion does not lead automatically to the substantive activity of representation” that women in fact have to be interested in women’s issues and really advocate for policy changes by working together with other women and civil society groups (p. 8). However, Htun and Piscopo concede that most of the policy changes that have been achieved for female issues have to do with policies against female violence and quota changes. Some of their (2010) recommendations to increase women’s political participation include: political parties to adopt measures to expand women’s opportunities to gain access to political office, formalize women’s caucuses and commissions, encourage cross party cooperation, and devote funds for female training.

Through their research Htun and Piscopo (2010) have found that “the connection between women’s presence and their empowerment depends not only on having a critical mass in political office but also on the societal beliefs and institutional arrangements that structure their opportunities to act effectively” (p. 12). The need in women’s political representation to analyze not only a critical mass but also to look at the societal structure ties to Phillips addition to the representation theory in that everyone in society must look at the role they play in keeping societal structures as they are. Overall, Henderson (2010) notes that “women’s presence in political office, particularly in legislation, does matter, as does their voting patterns. When compared to men, women elected officials are more progressive, more consensus-oriented, and more likely to introduce legislation that directly addresses women’s concerns (health care, education, welfare)” (p. 7). At the same time, “research on women legislators in Latin America has found that they are as effective in getting all types of legislation passed as their male counterparts, in some case more so” (p. 26) showing that women do make a difference in passing legislation and are an essential part of any democratic political system.

The Role of Quotas

This section will analyze the intersection between quotas, representation and critical mass theories in Mexican politics. According to critical mass theory a 30 percent number of elected female representatives must be active in politics to affect change. In Mexican politics quotas have currently been set at 40 percent. Following the logic of critical mass theory, therefore once Mexican women reach 30 percent in political representation they will be able to influence the political structure which includes the different types of legislation that are passed. In other words, once female representation reaches 30 percent they will have more influence in politics. However, it is not clear whether that number should apply to the whole country as a whole, or if

it should be met at different political levels. Although, at the federal level the 30 percent number stated in critical mass theory has been surpassed, this is not the case at the regional and local levels. Mexican women have only been able to reach 6 percent of high political positions at the regional and local level (INEGI, 2012). The disparity between the numbers of female politicians at the different levels of government leaves the question of whether change is possible without reaching 30 percent at the regional and local level. It also brings us to question whether critical mass theory is still applicable to women's political representation; this question is beyond the scope of this thesis.

As far as representation theory and quotas, I look at this intersection through the concepts of descriptive and substantive representation. Addressing descriptive representation and quotas, quotas in fact make it easier for women to access political office, but at the same time fail to clearly represent the electorate in Mexico since in most cases quota numbers are not reached. Unfulfilled quota numbers are due to many factors, most importantly that no mechanism exists to enforce them, and many loopholes exist in the law for parties to resist them. One of the loopholes used by parties is the phenomenon termed "*Juanitas*" in which parties nominate women, elect them, and later have them step down so a male substitute can take their place (Castro, 2012, ¶. 2). In the 2009 Congress elections 9 female candidates denounced their seats to a male substitute (Piscopo, 2011, p. 43). This shows that other factors are at play in Mexican politics that go beyond quotas. Following the logic of descriptive representation and quotas one might suppose that since the total female Mexican population consists of 51% this would translate to the same amount of political representation. However, as described above Mexico quota is set at 40%. In this view, quotas limit the amount of female political participation. On the other hand, addressing substantive representation, not all elected women necessarily advocate

for issues of gender as some are more concerned on advancing their own personal agenda.

However, the intersection between substantive representation and quotas research by Piscopo and Franceschet (2011, p. 454) has shown that women elected through quotas in fact suffer more of a “mandate effect” in which they are “compelled to speak and act for women.” More of this “mandate effect” will be further addressed in the first case study in Chapter IV analyzing Senator Gastelum’s initiatives.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND

This chapter includes different background sections including a brief historical background of the Mexican women's movement from the 1900s up to 1995, background of gender violence in Mexico, how the Mexican political system is organized, and background on the role of quotas in the Mexican political system. The Mexican women's movement is included to show that Mexican women have always been politically active. Gender violence background in Mexico highlights some dates of Mexico's accomplishments in passing and adopting norms against gender violence. The Mexican political system section gives a brief background on how the political system is structured and organized. The role of quotas in the Mexican political system section addresses how Mexican political parties have implemented quotas within their party.

Mexican Women's Movement

Women's activism and participation in politics is not new for Mexican women. Women have been politically active since the times of La Malinche helping Cortez in the conquest of Mexico, to Sor Juana voicing her thoughts against injustice, to the times of *soldaderas* (female soldiers) participating in the Mexican Revolutionary war of 1910. Mexican women have always had an active role in the history and politics of Mexico (Jaquette, 1994). However, not recognizing Mexican women as equal citizens in the political system, as stated in the literature review, has made politically active Mexican women throughout history appear rather invisible. This section aims to show that Mexican women have always been present in politics fighting for equality.

Jaquette (1994) and Rodriguez (1998) have done an immense amount of work in compiling Mexican women's historical political participation. They both note that Mexican women have always been involved in some type of politics and that often policies are geared toward the presiding President's perception of women's issues. The Mexican women's movement is divided into different "waves" or times periods that focus on different issues starting in the 1900's. The early 1890's were a period of changes in Mexico as the country grew and established itself as its own State away from Federalism and the rule of Spain. Dictator Porfirio Diaz ruled the country during this time. He is recognized for centralizing the government, bringing stability to the country and growth of the economy while in office. However, economic growth also brought many inequalities between different parts of the country and conflicts arose to overthrow Diaz as different groups demanded change for more freedom. Facing an armed revolution and Francisco I. Madero, a candidate from the opposition, Diaz officially resigned in 1911 and was exiled to Europe. While Madero was in power he passed various reforms that allowed different parties to form, from opposition parties to unions and agrarian groups. Madero's time in power was short lived as his party was weakened by divisions within and he was kidnapped and killed by Victoriano Huerta, military commander of the city, who took power. To this news other groups lead by Venustiano Carranza organized to overthrow Huerta, seen as an illegitimate ruler, and started the constitutionalist movement to restore order recognized by the 1857 Constitution. By March 1913, Carranza had taken over office as he was recognized as the only authority to have been elected democratically by the resistance.

Carranza's time in office consisted of passing social reforms for different groups and legitimizing and adjusting the laws of the new State. One of the social reforms that signals the

beginning of the Mexican women's movement was on December 29, 1914, as the government of President Carranza, influenced by Hermilda Galindo, a well known Mexican feminist, authorized a law granting divorce and remarriage, giving women more rights in relationships. Mexican women started organizing as the First Feminist Congress in Mexico was held in Merida on January 1916, and whose participants consisted of mostly middle class women. Topics of discussion included secular and sex education, political participation of women, and the alignment of their agenda for the Constitutional Convention of 1917. However, this group was split on the topic of suffrage, as some women agreed that women should be equal to men, while others argued that women are different and were not psychologically ready to participate in politics, a field seen only for men.

One woman, a well know Mexican feminist that supported women's equal rights, was Hermila Galindo. Galindo, known for speaking out for women's equal rights, "presented [her] demands for women's suffrage to the all-male constitutional convention meeting in Queretaro in 1917" arguing that women ought to have rights for equal representation (Jaquette, 1994, p. 200). This same year the Mexican Constitution gave all male citizens the right to vote, the National Election Law of 1918 "explicitly limited the vote to registered males 18 years or over if married and 21 if not" clearly eliminating a woman's right to vote. At this time even though women were considered citizens of the state with limited rights, they were only counted and considered under the care of a male family member (Jaquette, 1994, p. 200). Most women in the movement were either part of the elite class or with the feminist movement; this split however did not stop the women's movement as they continued to push for equal rights. A victory was received in 1917 as the Law of Family Relations was passed which "gave women the right to receive alimony, to manage and own property, to take part in legal suits, and to have same right as men

in the custody of their children” (Jaquette, 1994, p. 200). Feminists realized that they had to become better organized and, in 1919, the Rita Cetina Gutierrez feminist league was founded, with its purpose to promote “the political participation of women and support local candidates for government positions” showing how some women were willing to work together to push for equal rights (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 91).

The second wave of the women’s movement occurred in the 1920s, during this time Carranza’s time in power came to an end when he was assassinated by rebel troops on April 1920. Adolfo de la Huerta took interim power until Alvaro Obregon, secretary of war, took over office. Huerta was able to achieve peace with the northern rebels of the country, and in August 1923 Obregon’s government was officially recognized by the United States (Urrutia, 1994). In 1923, *El Consejo Feminista Mexicano* (Mexican Feminist Council) and the Mexican section of the Pan American League for the Advancement of Women were founded. Both aimed at “orienting women toward socialism” and “to promote the civil rights of women” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 92). These organizations were successful, as evident in 1923 when the states of Yucatan and San Luis Potosi gave women the right to vote in state and local elections. Unfortunately, local politicians against the measure later took away women’s right to vote. During the same year President Obregon announced that his successor would be Plutarco Elias Calles. When President Calles (1924 - 1934) took power his focus remained on growing the economy as he established the Bank of Mexico, the only one authorized to print money. In 1925, Chiapas became the “first state to enact complete equality of political rights for women in local and state elections, extending to them the same political rights as men, including the right to vote and stand for all offices” (Jaquette, 1994, p. 201). It was during this time that political parties took notice of these women’s groups’ influences as the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National

Revolutionary Party/PNR) and *Partido Nacional Antireeleccionista* (Antireelectionist National Party/PNA) in 1929 officially recognized that women's rights could be a useful political issue in campaigning, and the need to have women actively participate in women's movements. With this in mind the PNA, the opposition, ran Jose Vasconcelos for President. His campaign included women's suffrage in its political platform and a large number of women in its ranks (Jaquette, 1994, p. 202). The PNA party lost the election to Calle's candidate Ortiz Rubio from the PNR, but for the first time it was recognized by political parties that women were an essential part of their constituency. The PNR would later become the PRI and it would become tradition that each president would elect its successor (Urrita, 1994).

The third wave in the 1930's included women from different groups coming together. During this time President Ortiz Rubio was seen as an ineffective leader under the influences of Calles. Rubio resigned in 1932 after attempts against his life, he was succeeded by interim President Abelardo Rodriguez until the next election in 1934 when Lazaro Cardenas from the PNR was elected by Calles to rule. The meetings of 1931, 1933, 1934 of the National Congress of Women Workers and Peasants showed a divisive line between the communist women and autonomous feminist movement as "debate about whether women should pursue an autonomous agenda or subsume the gender struggle to the class struggle" became a topic of discussion (Jaquette, 1994, p. 203). At the end of the Congresses common ground was reached as both groups agreed on an eight-hour work day, minimum wages, paid leave for child birth, support for single mothers, punishment for abusive husbands, easier divorce proceedings, and the creation of jobs for women. Reaching common ground on issues showed the different groups of women that they did in fact share common goals, and that their differences were just barriers for change. So, in 1935, all the different women's groups of the time united to create one group, the *Frente*

Unico pro Derechos de la Mujer (Sole Front for Women's Rights, FUPDM). The groups' membership included 50,000 members and it united feminists from different backgrounds as it advocated for employment centers, created a children's department, pushed to reform labor law and civil code, and lobbied the government to give women the right to vote. Due to the hard work and advocacy of this group, on November 23, 1937 President Cardenas proposed to amend Article 34 in the constitution, to give women full citizenship, as it went to the National Congress. By May 1938 all states were in support of this amendment but the National Congress did not approve and thus failed to give women the right to vote, even though 16 states of the 28 at that time had already given women the right to vote in local elections (Jaquette, 1994).

During the next presidency, the FUPDM "lost its belligerence and political visibility" in the mist of Camacho's, the new president, conservative views of women, and concentrated more on establishing social programs (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 99). Showing that the perspective of women's issues by a President made the women's movement push for equal rights susceptible to whoever the Mexican President was at the time. Camacho also ended the presence of the military in government and adhered to Catholic beliefs as World War II continued around the world. It wasn't until 1947, when new President Aleman was elected that the FUPDM was again able to influence politics, as legislation was passed reforming Article 115 of the Constitution that gave women the right to fully participate in municipal elections (Rodriguez, 2003). The FUPDM had some political influence as Amalia Caballero de Castillo Ledon, part of the *Alianza de Mujeres Mexicanas* (Mexican Women's Alliance), used her close connections to the new President Ruiz Cortinez to convince him to tackle women's suffrage. In 1953, Cortinez agreed that if Castillo Ledon was able to gather five hundred thousand women to sign the petition on behalf of the measure he would declare equal suffrage (Rodriguez, 2003). Castillo Ledon was

successful in gathering the signatures, and President Ruiz Cortinez officially passed legislation to amend the constitution and electoral law to give women equal rights with men and the opportunity to participate in politics. This was a great achievement for Mexican women and, in 1955, the first four Mexican women were elected to Congress. However, this achievement was bittersweet as the government at the time was controlled by the PRI party, and these women's voting patterns remained in line with those as men. In 1958, the first Presidential election was held in which women had the opportunity to vote, doubling the total number of voters. Adolfo Lopez Mateo, from the PRI, was elected, his policies focused on cultural reforms, nationalizing electric companies, land reform, social welfare, and growing international relations. He faced social movements from teachers, doctors, train workers, and labor workers for increase in wages and benefits (Urrutia, 1994). In response he passed different policies establishing social security, free textbooks for all students, and passed minimum wage legislation, he became one of the most popular presidents, so much that the opposition likened him to a movie star (Urrutia, 1994, p. 253). During the 1960's the women's movement weakened, as suffrage had been passed, and most women's organizations became government sponsored, as the "PRI absorbed many politically active women and channeled them into positions within the bureaucracy" (Jaquette, 1994, p. 205). This was a time of stability and growth for Mexico, until the next President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz (1964 - 1970) came to power. Ordaz was faced with a student movement protesting the amount of political repression and lack of democracy. Facing growing manifestations by students and the middle class, Ordaz ordered in 1968 the massacre of a peaceful student protest in Tlateloco, awakening other parts of society about their role with government.

The next wave of the women's movement started in the mid-1970s as the 1973 economic crisis hit. Luis Echeverria (1970 - 1976), from the PRI, was president during this time. He passed policies allowing some liberties for political discourse within government, but not on television or radio, the mediums that reached society (Urrutia, 1994, p. 256). Students, middle class, and young professionals not conformed with the freedoms allowed began to question women's role in society and the inequality between men at home and the work place. During this time issues like denouncing oppression, analyzing gender roles, abortion, raising consciousness and sexual freedom became very important. In 1974 the *Coalicion de Mujeres Feministas* (Coalition of Feminist Women) also raised awareness of all the "problems women faced in Mexico and the Mexican government lack of responsiveness" at the United Nations convention, and called for women to "wake up" against all the inequalities (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 104). The year 1975 became a central time for Mexican women as it was named the year of Women and the International Women's Year Conference was held in Mexico City. This conference by the United Nations brought together 133 of their member states and was designed to bring to discussion issues of gender inequality, and set forth a plan to make changes to achieve equal rights between men and women.

The 1980s were faced with another economic crisis which brought Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) to Mexico, cutting many social services that primarily affected women and the poor, opening the door to many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide basic social services. NGOs became primarily focused on gender issues like "the design of public policies dealing with women, such as violence, sexual crimes, technical training, and reproductive health" (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 136). The women's movement weakened during this time due to limited resources opening a door for NGOs to take on advocacy for women's issues. President

Miguel de la Madrid (1982 – 1986) tried to fulfill campaign promises to create a more equalitarian society, failing as the number of poor people grew, the middle class was cut in half, and the wealthy got wealthier (Urrutia, 1994, p. 259). Madrid faced the growth of drug trafficking to the United States, many accusations of corruption in the political system, and the failing prices of oil. The 1990s brought many political changes and the women's movement became focused on getting women involved in politics. However, the political scene shifted in the legislature and all "attention and energies were focused on male issues like party finances, rules of electoral system, and distribution of positions, pushing away any political feminist agenda" (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 180). Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988 - 1994), from the PRI, was president during this time. A turning moment in the women's movement occurred in 1994 as outgoing President Salinas faced the Zapatista movement, the joining of NAFTA, and an economic crisis devaluating the peso, sending the country to instability where the president was forced to take military action.

The Zapatista movement occupied the state of Chiapas and called for more rights for the indigenous and marginalized populations in the country. This movement attracted many groups including feminist and LGBT groups that felt were being marginalized in politics. Indigenous women in the Zapatista movement and feminists organized the Chiapas Women's Convention, which offered educational workshops on "health, violence, and economic survival" (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 161). The Zapatista movement gave its participants leverage by gaining global support and pressuring the incoming President Zedillo to launch anti-poverty campaigns and allowed negotiation on issues like political representation, political autonomy, land rights, and compensation for resource extraction (Baum, 2010, ¶. 12). By joining NAFTA Mexico had to adopt neo-liberal policies that included lowering trade barriers with the United States and

Canada. In turn, some of the population publicly demonstrated their disagreement with the new policies as competitive advantage and jobs were lost.

In 1995, the *Convencion Nacional de Mujeres* (National Convention of Women, CNM) was organized to include sessions over issues like “women’s control over reproduction, violence against women, rape, representation at all levels of government and in formal terms in the constitution, and equal working conditions and pay” showing movement towards gaining equal representation in politics (Rodriguez, 1998, p.161). Since the 1990s Mexican women have gained more political participation and representation as their numbers in political office continue to grow. Even though more work still needs to be achieved in terms of control over reproduction, one can observed that Mexican women have and will continue to fight for equal rights. The following section will further address some background on gender violence in Mexico, on the achievements and norms adopted by the Mexican government against gender violence.

Gender Violence Background

As noted earlier, violence against women in Mexico really became into focus in the 1970’s as people began questioning women’s role in society and the inequality between men and women at home and the work place. During this time issues like denouncing oppression, analyzing gender roles, abortion, raising consciousness and sexual freedom became very important. Feminist organizations focused on three main themes: a) voluntary maternity, b) violence against women, and c) freedom of sexual choice (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 104). The year 1975, a central year for Mexican women, brought attention to Mexican women’s issues in the country and became a catalyst for change. The following years after the UN conference “feminist activity flourished: the first feminist publications appeared; the first women’s studies

course was taught; and the first rape crisis center was established” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 105).

Mexico recognized some international norms on violence against women, as it adopted many conventions and laws recognizing the unequal status of women in their society and efforts passed to combat violence against women. In 1981 Mexico took a big step in officially recognizing discrimination against women as a problem, they attended and ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Unfortunately, the economic crisis during this time affected social programs and it is known as the “lost decade” since the Mexican government was “forced to curtail all social spending, and any government-sponsored efforts related to women were essentially discontinued” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 107). It was not until 1991 that women from different political parties came together, and Congress passed legislation reforming the Rape Law, for “stiffening penalties against rapist and for better protection for victims” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 109). In 1993 Mexico also ratified the Declaration of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) recognizing the need of Mexican women to live a life free of violence. The year 1994 marked another year in which Mexico attended the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women “Belem Do Para Convention” in Brazil. This convention aimed to bring further attention to violence against women and call for action. In 1995 Mexico implemented PRONAM, a program aimed to helping women. On August 8, 1996 Mexico passed a law for the Assistance and Prevention of Intra-Family Violence, establishing centers for the assistance of victims; unfortunately this was only implemented in Mexico City. Further, in 1998, Mexico went on and ratified Belem do Para. In 1999 Mexico created PRONAVI to help women victims of violence, which in 2001 became INMUJERES, a governmental organization that aims in creating gender parity and create a culture free of violence against women. The year 2006

marked the first time the PGR created a special department in charge of managing and prosecuting cases of violence against women, adding in 2008 the treatment of persons as well. During this time the Mexican Chamber of Deputies also authorized the creation of the *Programa de Apoyo a las Instancias de Mujeres en las Entidades Federativas* (Program to Support the State Level Institutes for Women/PAIMEF) which has set aside part of the annual budget to fund state level women's programs "that seek to detect, prevent, and eradicate violence against women" (Piscopo, 2011, p. 309). One of the success stories in the fight against gender violence was the 2007 passage and publication by the president of the *Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia* (Law for General Access of Women for a Life Free from Violence/LGAMVL) which aims to "define violence as psychological, physical, sexual or any other type of violence that harms or is likely to harm women's dignity, integrity or freedom" (Kennedy, 2007, ¶. 11). It also requires federal and local authorities to respond appropriately.

Even though all these laws, norms, and conventions have been adopted there is still a long way to go. Currently, 44 women's shelters operate nationwide to respond to violence against women (Organizacion, 2012). A far cry from improvement considering 37 years have passed since the establishment of the first one in 1976, and that there are 31 states in a country where 65 percent of its female population has been a victim of violence. Clearly, something more than norms, laws, and conventions are needed to combat violence against women. The United Nations CEDAW Mexico status report states that Mexico has in fact made some advancement, but still needs to "systematically and continuously implement all provisions" as it has failed to keep girls and women free of violence (Convention, 2012, p. 2). The status of implementing CEDAW goals and compliance, and the 2007 law will be further address in the barriers section

in Chapter IV. The following section will give a brief background on how the Mexican political system is structured.

Mexican Political System

Mexico is a Federal Representative Republic composed of 31 states and 1 Federal District. The government structure is divided into three branches. The first is the Executive Branch, composed of the President, who serves in six-year terms known as the *sexenio*. The second is the Judicial Branch, composed of the Supreme Court of Justice, the Electoral Tribunal and other courts. The third is the Legislative Branch, composed of the *Congreso de la Union* (Congress of the Union). The Congress is divided into two chambers, *Camara de Senadores* (the Senate) and *Camara de Diputados* (Chamber of Deputies). The Chamber of Deputies has 500 members, each member serves a 3-year term, 200 of those members are elected by proportional representation, while the others are elected from single-member districts. The Senate has 128 members, each state is allowed four seats, and they serve in 6-year terms. Both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies are in charge of introducing initiatives, passing legislation, as well as reviewing and approving initiatives by the President. Congress has two ordinary sessions per year,

The first session begins on November 1 and continues until no later than December 31; the second session begins on April 15 and may continue until July 15. A Permanent Committee (Comisión Permanente), consisting of thirty-seven members (eighteen senators and nineteen deputies), assumes legislative responsibilities during congressional recesses. The president may call for extraordinary sessions of congress to deal with important legislation (Mexico Government, 2012, ¶. 11)

Regionally each state and local municipality has a similar structure for governing their locality and passing laws. The three main political parties in Mexico are: 1) *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party/PRI), 2) *Partido Revolucionario*

de la Democracia (Party of the Democratic Revolution/PRD), 3) *Partido de Acción Nacional* (National Action Party/PAN). Each party approaches women's participation differently, this will be addressed in the next section on the role of quotas in Mexican politics.

Historically, as noted in the women's movement section, Mexico comes from a background of dictatorship and one party-rule style government. It was not until 2000 that the PRI lost its one-party rule since 1910, to the PAN, the more conservative of the parties, to its candidate for President Vicente Fox. Fox campaigned to end government corruption and improve the economy. During Fox's presidency the Congress LVII Legislative session (2003 - 2006) was evenly split between the PRI and the PAN in the Chamber of Deputies, but not the Senate. In the Chamber of Deputies the PRI had 41 percent of the elected seats, the PAN had 41 percent of elected seats, and the PRD held 10 percent of elected seats. In the Senate the PRI held 46 percent of elected seats, the PAN had 36 of elected seats, and the PRD held 12 percent of elected seats. During the LIX Legislative session (2003 - 2006) the PRI kept control of Congress, even though both the PAN and PRI lost some of its seats to the PRD. In the Chamber of Deputies the PRI held 40 percent of elected seats, the PAN had 29 percent of seats, while the PRD held 19 percent of elected seats. In the Senate the PRI held 44 percent of elected seats, the PAN had 36 percent of elected seats, and the PRD held 11 percent of elected seats. The control of Congress by the PRI made it hard for Fox to pass proposals to stabilize the economy and improve bilateral cooperation in issues of immigration and drug trafficking (Vicente, 2013). Fox was succeeded by President Felipe Calderon in 2006 also from the PAN. Calderon policies lined with liberal fiscal policies and conservative social policies. As part of his policies Calderon also waged a battle against the drug cartels increasing violence in the country (Bonner, 2012). During Calderon's presidency the Congress LX Legislative session (2006 – 2009) and LXI

Legislative session (2009 – 2012) were split. The Chamber of Deputies was controlled by the PRI with 48 percent of elected seats, followed by the PAN with 28 percent of elected seats, and the PRD with 14 percent of seats (Diputados, 2012). On the other hand the Senate was controlled by the PAN with 39 percent of elected seats, the PRI with 25 percent of elected seats, the PRD with 19 percent of elected seats (Estadísticas, 2012). This split also made it hard for President Calderon to pass many policies, while at the same time he rejected some as will be further discussed in Chapter IV case studies.

The Role of Quotas in Mexican Politics

The role of quotas in the Mexican political system shows how access for women to the political system had to be institutionalized to encourage women's political representation. The purpose of the quota law is to encourage and promote women's participation in political parties by reserving a specific number of seats or appointments only for women to fill. Mexico officially implemented quotas in 1996, following a 1990s international trend in which other Latin America countries passed quotas, and made it mandatory for parties in 2002. The Mexican political system for electing a representative consists of both a mixed system of proportional representation (PR) and single-member. Proportional representation refers to the number of candidates running for office; in other words more than one member can represent a constituency from one district. Single-member refers to one person running for office for one constituency. This difference in how one is elected to office is vital because "proportional systems have beneficial ramifications for female candidates; research shows that women are almost twice as likely to be elected under the rules governing a proportional system" (Henderson, 2010, p. 14). Currently, in the 2012 Mexican Senate,

Political parties are required to guarantee that women constitute at least 40 percent of candidates. This applies to both lists of candidates for the PR election,

and the candidates for the constituency elections. However, parties who democratically elect their candidates are exempt from the regulations - COFIPE, Article 219 (Mexico, 2012, ¶. 1)

Although quota laws have been implemented, no clear enforcement mechanism has been established to make sure that political parties follow them. At the same time not all political parties are supporters of institutionalizing quotas as the PAN initially opposed them, while the PRI and PRD have “formally and explicitly instituted a quota system both within its internal party structure and its candidate list” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 180). Currently, each party has implemented different levels of quotas within, the PRD leads with an internal quota of 50 percent, the PRI 30 percent, and the PAN “ruled in 2000 that each pair of candidates (primary and substitute) must contain one woman” (Piscopo, 2011, p. 43). These differences are due to the way each party views and approaches women. The PRD is the party that most progressively supports women, its rhetoric “views women as important actors in the workplace and in the public sphere” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 121). Their platform clearly shows that they support women’s issues like equal pay, birth control, nonsexist education, proportional representation of women in government, elimination of discrimination, and educational opportunities among others. It was also the only party that stipulated thirty percent of its candidate list be women in the early 1990s. The highest ranking women from their party include Amalia Garcia, who became president of the party, and Rosario Robles, who became Mayor of Mexico City. In the current LXII legislature, the PRD controls 104 of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 39 of them women, that is 37% of female representation within the party at this level. In the Senate, the PRD controls 22 of the seats, 16 of them women, that is 72% of female representation within the party at this level (INEGI, 2012).

The PRI for the most part has been successful in attracting women to the party, as it includes in their party statements that they are concerned “with women’s participation in the formal structure of government, and that this participation must be commensurate with women’s contributions to society as a whole” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 116). They have also been very involved with other women’s organizations and through their platform support women’s sex education, birth control, women’s control over their bodies, reforming laws against violence, and encourage girls to stay in school. The establishment of OMNPRI shows that they are indeed committed to women’s issues, more on the role of the OMNPRI will be discussed in Chapter IV. Most notably, the party has had women, like Beatriz Paredes, Maria de los Angeles Moreno, and Dulce Maria Sauri occupy important positions of power within the party. In the LXII legislature, the PRI controls 212 of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 80 of them women, that is 37% of female representation within the party at this level. In the Senate, the PRI controls 52 of the seats, 18 of them women, that is 35% of female representation within the party at this level (INEGI, 2012).

The PAN, the most conservative of the parties, supports women in their rhetoric by stating that they “support women in whatever roles they choose, whether that means staying at home to care for the family or running for public office” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 118). The party platform includes celebrating the differences between sexes, prizing motherhood, and promoting women’s traditional roles. In spite of these views a few senior PAN women have been able to reach positions in the national executive committee like Maria Elena Alvarez, Cecilia Romero, Esperanza Morenos Borja, among others. In the current LXII legislature, the PAN controls 114 of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 36 of them women, that is 31% of female representation

within the party at this level. In the Senate, the PAN controls 38 of the seats, 11 of them women, that is 29% of female representation within the party at this level (INEGI, 2012).

CHAPTER IV

A FEMALE LEGISLATOR AND THE PROCESS OF A LAW

This chapter will present two case studies. The first case study will analyze the participation of National Senator Diva Gastelum. Specifically, it will cover her role in the Senate as a female politician and engagement with issues that concern women's issues during the years 2009 through 2012. This case study will analyze the role one woman plays in the legislature and look at what kind of agenda she sets forth. The second case study will analyze the legislative process of Congress by following the history of the *Ley General de Victimas* (General Law for Victims/LGV), a current piece of legislation that aims to provide services to victims of violence and crime. I will look at who presented this initiative, its supporters, implementation, its current state and challenges. By analyzing both case studies I hope to gain knowledge on how female victims of violence are perceived, to show the complexities of passing legislation against violence, to show that passing legislation does not necessarily translate to action, and to show the contrast between the work of a female senator and the process of passing a law. The following section will give some context in which both case studies are being studied by analyzing results from a national survey of Mexican citizen's view of politics and the state of Mexican politics during the LXI Legislative session (2009 - 2012).

Setting the Stage

To understand the case studies some context is needed. To accomplish this I will analyze empirical data results of the 2008 National Survey on Political Culture and Practice of Citizenship (ENCUP) by the Special Program for Promoting Democratic Culture issued by the Mexican Ministry of the Interior. This national survey measures the views of Mexican citizens of politics, the senate, institutions, and the rate of involvement and participation. This survey was conducted at a national level in 2008, in the 31 states and 1 Federal district of Mexico, and

interviewed over 5,000 households. The main focus of the survey was to diagnose the political culture and Mexican citizens practices; to identify the factors that explain, condition, and contribute; with the main goal to be able to contribute and promote a cultural transformation that can sustain democracy in Mexico (Encuesta, 2008).

Although Mexico is an officially recognized democracy the ENCUP survey revealed that only forty-eight percent of Mexican citizens “agree” and believe to live in a democracy. This paradox is reflected as most citizens note that they are not satisfied with the way democracy is practiced, with twenty-seven percent “somewhat satisfied”, thirty-four percent “little satisfied”, and twenty percent “not satisfied”. Another question considers how people identify in the political spectrum. Twenty-nine percent of the population places itself “on the right” with conservative views, eleven percent “on the left” with liberal views, and twelve percent in “the middle” with centric views, however forty-one percent “didn’t know” how to identify. This high percentage of respondents (41%) not identifying could correlate to the way the citizens view political parties. For example, when participants were asked how much trust political parties inspired thirty-five percent stated “none” and thirty-six percent “little” trust, with only three percent reporting that political parties inspired “a lot” of trust. Meanwhile, respondents believe that political parties have the power to change things in Mexico. Thirty-four percent said “much power”, thirty percent said “some power”, and only twenty percent of respondents said “little power”. Trust was a big factor and of all the organizations that could be trusted an overwhelming forty-two percent of respondents stated that the church was the one to inspire a “lot of trust”. On the subject of security and trust, forty-five percent of respondents stated that the police inspired “no trust at all”, twenty-seven percent said “little trust”, and eighteen percent said “some trust”. The lack of trust in the police could correlate to their response to victims of

violence and why many episodes of violence go unreported. At the same time, citizens believe that the government should intervene when violence inside families occurs. Sixty-two percent of respondents “agree” and twenty-six percent “disagree” that some type of government intervention is necessary to respond to intra-familial violence. For the government to be able to intervene in cases of violence, senators and public officials must enact the necessary legislation. This response is hard when most of the population does not agree with the work being done by their representatives. Thirty-one percent of the population “somewhat” approves of the job being done by senators, while twenty-five percent disapproves “a lot”, and the rest are somewhere in the middle. And as Phillips (1995) noted, change in legislation is hard “when policies are worked out *for* rather than *with* a political excluded constituency, they are unlikely to engage with all relevant concerns” (p. 13) making it less likely to have an adequate response to violence through legislation.

When respondents were asked about what senators and deputies take into account when passing legislature forty-nine percent believe that they take into account “their own interest”, twenty-five percent believe they take the “interest of their parties”, and only ten percent believe that they take the “interest of their constituents” into consideration. When asked how much power individual legislators have to change things, thirty-two percent of respondents said “much power”, thirty percent said “some power”, and twenty percent said “little power”. Thirty-seven percent of the population also believes that “better politicians” are needed to represent constituents. Thirty-four percent believe that “better laws” are needed to protect and help people, and twenty-four percent agree that “both better politicians and better laws” are necessary to bring change. Overall, a sentiment of disillusionment exist in Mexican citizens since they believe they can only voice their opinion and change things through voting as 50% of

respondents “agree” with this statement. Additionally, 51% of respondents “agree” that politics are sometimes too complicated to understand and might be correlated to why the disillusionment exists. The disillusionment is further expanded as 68% of respondents “agree” that laws are only created to benefit a few. Clearly something has to change to dispel the disillusionment and give Mexican citizens a bigger sense of living and participating in a democracy. More needs to be done to encourage a greater level of trust in the political system, whether that includes education or encouraging participation and openness, since in a democracy citizens are supposed to control the government by electing who represents them.

Further, some political context is needed to understand the setting of the two case studies and the update on the LGV. During the LXI Legislative session (2009 – 2012), the Mexican President was Felipe Calderon from the PAN, the more conservative of the parties, and his policies lined with liberal fiscal policies and conservative social policies. As part of his policies Calderon had also waged a battle against the drug cartels increasing violence in the country, which might point to why Congress worked together to pass a General Law for Victims, more will be discussed in the second case study (Bonner, 2012). Congress during this legislative session was split. The Chamber of Deputies was controlled by the PRI with 48 percent of elected seats (Diputados, 2012). The Senate was controlled by the PAN with 39 percent of elected seats (Estadisticas, 2012) and a new President took over office on December 2013. The following section will address the role of Senator Gastelum in Congress and her track record during the LXI Legislative session.

Case Study 1: A Female Legislator

This case study will analyze whether National Senator Diva Gastelum is representing in a descriptive or substantive role in Congress, as well as her effectiveness in passing legislation. I

will look at Gastelum's role in Congress as a female, her level of participation, and engagement with issues that concern women. By examining the life of Senator Gastelum in Congress as a female politician I aim to respond these questions: 1) To what extent do women politicians follow party lines and to what extent do women politicians have autonomous agendas? 2) To what extent do women politicians get to participate in policy making and what role do quotas play in female participation?

National Senator Diva Hadamira Gastelum Bajo, an only child, was born on July 30, 1961 in Guasave, Sinaloa. Her parents Felix Gastelum Lopez, a lawyer, and Edelmira Bajo Romero, a teacher, note that being an only child, Gastelum had to be special, hence her name. Diva is Latin for divine, and Hadamira, in Spanish a fairy that looks after others (ONMPRI, 2012). Her education includes a Masters in 1998 in Social and Family Law from the Autonomous University of Sinaloa as well as a Bachelors in Law from the Occidente University in Sinaloa. Gastelum's background reflects that of many female politicians that have served in different educational and local political posts before reaching the federal level. From 1987-1995 she served as the director at the municipal level of the *Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (Integral Family Development/DIF) in Sinaloa. From 1985 to 1988 she served for the *Secretaria de Educación Publica* (Secretary of Public Education/SEP). From 1996 to 2001 she served as Director of the Interdisciplinary Center of Investigation for the Integral Regional Development at the *Instituto Politecnico Nacional* (National Politecnico Institute/IPN). From 1988 to 2001, and 2007 to 2009 she served in the local government as a deputy. Her federal representation experience includes serving in the Chamber of Deputies from 2003 to 2006, and 2009 to 2012. Gastelum was elected to the National Senate in 2012 by proportional representation to represent district 4 Guasave in the state of Sinaloa. She has served in various ordinary and special

committees dealing with human rights, gender and equality, and constitutional issues (H. Congreso, 2006). She has also served as president of the Gender and Equity Committee, which focuses on reviewing how initiatives might affect women taking gender into account. Gastelum is an outspoken supporter of women's equality and rights as she has addressed Congress on many gender issues, but does this translate to sponsoring legislation that supports women's issues? To find the answer, I will analyze all the initiatives Senator Gastelum presented and co-sponsored in the Chamber of Deputies.

Gastelum presented and co-sponsored a total of 50 initiatives from September 2009 to April 2012, of the fifty initiatives 14 were approved, 32 were not approved, and 4 are listed as pending. In other words, Gastelum, as of April 2012, had a success rate of 28% in passing her initiatives. This success rate is higher than most of her fellow female PRI members that average an 11% success rate in passing legislation during the LXI session (Listado, 2012). The following will outline the different initiatives presented to analyze if Gastelum is serving a descriptive or substantive role as a female politician. I have organized the fifty different initiatives into 9 different categories depending on the subject they address. The most initiatives presented by Gastelum, with nine, introduced in Congress deal with family issues. Family initiatives include issues like childcare, elderly care, and creating a department to deal with family issues and resources. Government initiatives follow, with eight initiatives, which deal with how the federal, state and local systems work, how they are organized, and how political parties follow quotas and encourage women's participation. Following, with seven each, are initiatives dealing with worker's and victim's rights. Worker's rights initiatives address issues of pensions, working conditions, and benefits, while victim's rights initiatives address victim's compensation, treatment by authorities, and services. Next with five initiatives each, are education, health and

human rights initiatives. Education initiatives address issues of access and cost, expanding the curriculum, and expanding the development of information technologies. Health initiatives address women's family planning as a basic service, prenatal and delivery services, and psychological services for children. Human rights initiatives address the election of the president of the National Human Rights Commission, rights of the disabled, immigrant's rights, and the passage of a law to prevent, investigate, and persecute those in violation of human rights as declared by the United Nations. Lastly, with two each, are initiatives dealing with the environment and women's equality. The two initiatives addressing the environment deal specifically with disaster relief funds and allocating funds for the preservation and improvement of needy areas. The three initiatives specifically addressing women's inequality, call for funds to promote women's equality, eradicate violence and discrimination against women, and women's expansion of health services like family planning and prenatal care.

Further, the initiatives that had the most success rate of passing were education initiatives. Three of the five education initiatives presented in Congress were passed. See table I for a breakdown of initiatives by category and rate of passage. Based on the initiatives presented by Gastelum one can accurately state that she substantively represents women as most of her initiatives are geared towards improving women's lives. Analyzing the initiatives presented and co-sponsored by Senator Gastelum show that in fact she is not only acting in a representative role, by being a female, but also in a substantive role by supporting women's issues. Her voting record also reflects similar qualities as she has voted in favor of many social issues that help women. The topics of her initiatives indeed affect women directly and indirectly, through family, education, government organization, worker's rights, victim's rights, health, human rights, women's equality, and the environment.

Table I - Gastelum Proposed Initiatives in the Legislature Sept 2009 - Apr 2012.

Category	Passed	Not Passed	Pending
Family	0	6	2
Government	1	7	
Worker's Rights	1	6	
Victim's Rights	2	5	
Education	3	2	
Health	2	3	1
Human Rights	2	3	
Women's Equality	2	0	
Environment	0	1	1

At the same time Gastelum follows and supports her party lines as she serves as President of the *Organismo Nacional de Mujeres Priistas* (National Organization of PRI Women/ONMPRI). The ONMPRI was officially established in 1999 by the PRI to recognize that women play a big part in the political process. The role of the ONMPRI is to engage women, and promote gender equity, eradicate discrimination and violence against women, and promote a culture of respect and equal opportunities between genders. As president of the ONMPRI, Gastelum came up with a workplan listing the objectives she would like to accomplish. The objectives in the workplan include: women's human rights, gender parity, PRI party inclusion of workplan, and transparency of actions. Some specific projects she describes include the creation of a virtual classroom to share ideas, reports, and information, to harmonize the activities of all women in the party, and a course to teach all those in the party about

women's human rights and gender parity. Propositions in the workplan also include: the creation and diffusion of the number of women and men in the party and the levels they hold, increase indigenous women's participation in politics, support the professional development of young women in the party, capacitate women to take on leadership positions, and support the creation of the mechanism necessary to sanction the failure of the party to follow party rules.

Overall responding to the initial questions of: 1) To what extent do women politicians follow party lines and to what extent do women politicians have autonomous agendas? and 2) To what extent do women politicians get to participate in policy making and what role do quotas play in female participation? Senator Gastelum has been successful in navigating party politics and pursuing her own agenda that includes many women's issues specifically addressing the inequality between men and women. She plays a central role in the PRI heading her party's organization to promote women's political representation through ONMPRI. Gastelum also presented and co-sponsored many initiatives showing that she gets to fully participate in policy making, and it seems that female politicians whether there due to a quota or not get to fully participate. Gastelum is serving as both representative and substantive representation roles, as she is not only a female, but also supports issues that affect women. Her track record shows that she gets to fully participate in policy making as she has been cited to be one of the most productive senators in the legislature (Improductivos, 2012). Gastelum's role as a female politician further points out that perhaps there needs to be an additional category that combines both descriptive and substantive representation in discussing women's political representation.

Case Study 2: The Process of a Law

This second case study will analyze one current piece of legislation, the *Ley General de Víctimas* (General Law for Victims/LGV), who presented this initiative, its supporters,

implementation, and its current state and challenges. This law was chosen to show one of the ways the Mexican government is responding to the high incidence of violence. By analyzing this piece of legislation, I will answer the following questions: 1) Are Mexican female politicians writing and advocating effective legislation against violence? and 2) What are some of the challenges and barriers in passing legislation against violence?

The *Ley General de Victimias*, was first presented in the Senate on April 22, 2010, by Senators Felipe Gonzalez Gonzalez, Jaime Rafael Dias Ochoa, and Ramon Galindo from the PAN (Ley General, 2012). The initiative requested the expedition of the passage and implementation of a law for victims that would create the basis to respond to victims of violence and crime. The initiative aimed to overcome problems of coordination between budgeting, legislation, structure and infrastructure to be able to respond to victims immediate needs. More urgently a response was needed to ensure the safety of victims and victim's families from organized crime. The initiative intended to provide services without the re-victimization of victims, in different areas of their lives that includes judicial assistance, financial assistance, medical and psychological services, and in some cases restitution. It asks that a *Fondo Federal para el Auxilio y Compensacion Economica a la Victima del Delito* (Federal Fund for the Assistance and Economic Compensation to Victims of Crime) be implemented, as a type of emergency fund that could assist victims economically in dire need or extreme necessity based on their socioeconomic status. At that time the initiative was assigned to the *Comisiones Unidas de Justicia y Estudios Legislativos* (United Committee of Justice and Legislative Studies) for analysis and review, and seems to have been stalled in that committee.

During another session, on December 28, 2011, the *Ley General de Proteccion y Reparacion Integral a Victimias de Violaciones a Derechos Humanos generados por violencia*

(General Law for Protection and Integral Restitution to Victims of Human Rights Violations Generated by Violence), an initiative really similar to the previous LGV initiative, was presented by Senator Tomas Torres Mercado from the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD). The initiative aimed to set up services to help victims, as well as get financial assistance, and included any victim whose human rights were violated due to violence. The initiative was supported by the *Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad* (Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity/MPJD), headed by Mexican Poet and Activist Javier Sicilia, and other civil society organizations focused on defending victim's rights and their families. This initiative added more elements to the previous LGV initiative to help victims like:

- a) Right to the truth, right to be informed of what and when crime occurred, who were the assailants, who were the victims, what were the sociopolitical conditions that created the violence;
- b) Right to access the justice system, crimes be investigated, that those responsible for crimes be investigated, persecuted, judged and sentenced, fight against impunity;
- c) Measures to avoid repetition through the creation of legal and institutional conditions, so that the criminal actions that hurt life, integrity, and freedom do not repeat (Ley General, 2012, p. 11).

The proponents of this initiative also added that victims are not only victims of their assailants, but also victims of criminal violence, institutional violence, societal violence, and most of all victims of impunity of a state system that is not taking responsibility in protecting its citizens. It further called for all victims' services to be free and offered by public and private organizations, and any other civil society group. It demanded that the *Procuraduria General de la Republica* (Attorney General of the Republic/PGR) establish a program that protects victims and witnesses whose participation in persecuting their assailants puts their security and life at risk. The initiative aimed to create the *Coordinacion Nacional de Atencion y Reparacion Integral a las Victimas* (National Coordination of Integral Care and Compensation for Victims),

to coordinate all victims' services at different levels, from federal, state, municipality, and the Federal District, to: a) guarantee fast and efficient services for victims, b) evaluate all the victim services programs at the different levels for better coordination, c) work together with public and private organizations to complement services, d) establish a mechanism for integral compensation for victims, and e) guarantee a just and efficient management of resources to help victims. Lastly, it called to the *Comision Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (National Commission of Human Rights), to be the organization responsible for implementing and maintaining a National Registry of Victims, and to record not only victims of organized crime, but also victims of violence committed by state entities. This initiative was passed on to the *Comisiones Unidas de Justicia y Estudios Legislativos* (United Committee of Justice and Legislative Studies) for analysis and review and seems to have been halted there.

It was not until April 17, 2012, that the *Ley General de Victimas* (LGV) was presented again in the Senate by Senators Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera, Jesus Murillo Karam, Pedro Joaquin Coldwell, Amira Griselda Gomez Tueme, Melquiades Morales Flores and others from the PRI. This time, however, the initiative was presented with support from over thirteen more senators from all the different parties, including female senators, and civil society groups. The initiative was again assigned to the *Comisiones Unidas de Justicia y Estudios Legislativos* (United Committee of Justice and Legislative Studies) for analysis and review.

The third time the initiative was presented it strongly called for the state to take responsibility for the security and safety of its citizens, and to recognize not only the victims but also the gross violations of human rights due to violence. Supporters of the initiative point out that Article 20 in the Constitution already calls for equality in the rights of victims and assailants, and that the initiative would strengthen the constitution towards a better democracy. Proponents

of the initiative note that no legislation or system has been established that obligates the authorities at different levels of government to follow and respect victim's rights. The initiative emphasizes that victims should have guaranteed access to educational institutions, subsidy programs for education, and full healthcare access that includes access to medications, physical rehabilitation, and programs for mental health and well-being. This version of the initiative also made sure to include a nondiscrimination clause for reasons of age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability. It also adds a 10th article that states that victims shall be provided with access to a victim advocate that can help them navigate the court system. The initiative was again sent to the *Comisiones Unidas de Justicia y Estudios Legislativos* where it proved to be a success as the committee responded positively adding some suggestions to the initiative, that included clarifying language and unifying the role of government organizations already working on providing victim's services.

The Senate approved the initiative on April 25, 2012, with 93 votes in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions. Twenty percent of the votes in favor consisted of female senators. One million pesos (\$77,890.20 USD) was approved for the initiative as it went to the Chamber of Deputies for review and approval (Michele, 2012). The Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved the initiative on April 30, 2012, with 369 votes in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions. Thirty-five percent of the votes in favor consisted of female deputies, including Gastelum. Supporters noted that "a law like this should not exist since it is due to a large collective tragedy, and in some terms Mexico is late in adopting it, but we must highlight that fortunately now it exists", as it went to the Secretary of Government for review to be sent to the President for final approval (Camarena, 2012, ¶. 2). One thing to note regarding the voting is that even though 35 Senators and 131 Deputies were absent, the Mexican Constitution Article 63 states that in order

for a law to pass at least 65 yes votes are needed from the Senate and at least 251 yes votes are needed from the Chamber of Deputies. The absence of Senators and Deputies during sessions has been widely criticized in the Mexican media as during the first period of the past session 946 absences were reported and the legislators still received full pay (Caporal, 2013, ¶. 3).

Analyzing the assistance records for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies during the week of April 24, 2012, it is clear that on average only 377 Deputies assisted sessions, and only 107 Senators assisted sessions that week (Asistencia, 2012). In general, Senators and Deputies are allowed 5 previously approved absences. Additionally, they are allowed to leave the floor as many were reported not present during voting time, and the Chamber of Deputies allows *asistencia por cedula*, a mechanism that allows Deputies to record their presence even if they are not on the floor. Unfortunately, no mechanism for transparency has been established for the public to examine the reasons for the absences or hold legislators accountable for more than 5 unjustified absences.

On May 10, 2012, various Deputies came out to the media and stated that the approval of the LGV initiative had been approved too swiftly, as it contained various errors and some proposed changes were not made, and that they wanted the initiative back for modifications (Mendez, 2012). Apparently this request was not correctly communicated until much later as the initiative went on to the President on May 30, as the thirty-day limit for review and changes started. By June 30th, the Senate had not heard back with any changes from the Executive in the time limit given by the constitution, and ordered the publication of the law. On July 1, 2012, President Felipe Calderon sent word to the Senate opposing the law assuring the Senate that the law was unconstitutional and presented a 40-page paper with his eleven reasons against the law. Some of those reasons included: 1) He questioned the ability of the *Sistema Nacional de*

Atención a Víctimas (National System for Victim's Assistance) to be able to establish and coordinate programs, as well as be able to bring together local authorities, municipalities and autonomous organizations, 2) He claimed that the costs were unquantifiable, therefore inconsistent, 3) He claimed that the law is questionable, since its provisions do not differentiate where states are financially responsible and which type of criminals are liable, and that the compensation scheme is not harmonious with other mechanism of compensation already set forth in the Mexican legislation (Robles, 2012).

However, the Senate argued that no changes could be made as the time limit for review had expired and should be allowed to stand as is. Consequently, the President used his executive powers and vetoed the LGV, sending the law and controversy of passage to the Mexican Supreme Court by request of the Senate. In September 2012, President Calderon introduced his version of a law for victims to the Senate for review. The President's initiative *Ley General de Atención y Protección a las Víctimas* (General Law of Protection and Attention for Victims) is not as in-depth as the original law. The law differentiates between direct victim and indirect victim, making sure both benefit from the rights and services when they have been physically or mentally affected. The President proposed creating a National Conference for the Integral Attention to Victims to be coordinated by Provictima, an organization mandated by the President in 2011 to assist those victims that feel that the authorities have not heard them or treated them correctly to be accompanied in the search of information, answers and attention by the state (Antecedentes, 2011). As far as economic assistance, victims will be provided with the correct resources if they have suffered damages to their health, loss of employment or food sources due to an injury or sickness. It aims to create thirty-three different assistance funds to cover cost of care and protection to those who have suffered great losses, the funds will be integrated with the

public budget and the sale of offender's property. At the same time, the reform of the *Ley General de Contabilidad Gubernamental* (General Law of Government Accounting) will bring transparency and harmony to governmental financial information of the spending of public funds (Senado, 2012).

The supporters of the LGV did not agree with President Calderon new initiative as they feel it does not go far enough to protect and help victims. They note that the call for the creation of the Fund for Victims had precedents, since a similar fund, *Fondo de Auxilio Economico a Familiares de las Victimas de Homicidios de Mujeres* (Economic Assistance Fund for Families Victims of Female Homicides) had already been created to assist victims in the city of Juarez, Chihuahua, as response from the Federal government to help the families victims of femicides. The only difference in the LGV initiative is that their fund would be available to respond and assist any victim of violence or organized crime in an urgent matter. It also adds the dimension of "indirect victim" in that family members of "direct victims" would now be considered eligible to receive all victim services. The President's initiative proposes that the PGR section of human rights, care to victims and services to the community, an agency already created, take on the task of implementing and coordinating the new victim's services to avoid the creation of another agency. Analyzing President Calderon's organization Provictima, there is only one located in Mexico City and sixteen others throughout Mexico. Sixteen Provictima organizations are not enough to provide services to all victims in the country, especially considering that each of the thirty one states varies in region size and population. And as previously noted, services like women's shelters are also lacking, showing how a victim's assistance law is urgently needed in a country where violence has become an everyday occurrence. Senators Felipe Gonzalez Gonzalez, Jaime Rafael Dias Ochoa, and Ramon Galindo, note that with the implementation of

the LGV law it would give the government the capability to urgently respond to victim's immediate needs and help with the legal process in an efficient and just way. They also note that by passing their initiative it would help to shift the culture, and call on the population to denounce crime.

At the time of writing this thesis the LGV was resurrected by incoming President Enrique Peña Nieto as he enacted the law on January 2013 and order Congress to reform it. Currently, Congress is analyzing the law and making necessary changes as 144 amendments were made since its passage in 2012 (Mercado & Brito, 2013). The Senate approved the law on March 22, 2013 with some changes and has sent it to the Chamber of Deputies for review. The changes made in the Senate consist of clarifying and defining the types of victims, how victim's compensation will be handled, a time limit victims have to wait to get feedback, simplify the mechanism to register victims, and modified articles so that resources attained from offenders will go to the victim's fund (Senado, 2013). There are now different types of victims listed in the law as: potential victims, indirect victims, and victimizing facts. Potential victims include those that might be at risk of violence for protecting and helping victims, and are now allowed protection in case their right to life and liberty are threatened. Indirect victim refers to the families or individuals that are directly connected to the victim. Victimizing facts refers to the acts or omissions that damage or jeopardize the legal rights of a person making them a victim including a violation of their human rights (El Senado, 2013). The updated LGV law gives it the steps necessary to implement and enforce, which is why past critics from victim's organizations in Mexico have now endorsed it (Mercado & Brito, 2013).

The passing of the law has resurrected discussion of why President Calderon opposed it in the first place. It has also brought criticism on new President Peña Nieto for passing a law and

then sending it back to Congress for changes. In my opinion, President Calderon opposed the law because he would have had to officially take responsibility for the high incidence of violence as a result of his battle against organized drug cartels and the failure of the government to protect its citizens. As 60,000 deaths and tens of thousands are reported missing as a result of violence against the drug cartels (Villagran, 2013). Calderon's judicial advisor Miguel Alessio Robles sustains that the LGV is an "error" because it is inoperable and unconstitutional, since Congress would have to modify the Constitution in this area first before requiring states and municipalities to enact changes (Las diferentes, 2013). Robles also noted that the passage of the law now would not be retroactive and that this was just unfair for past victims. President Peña Nieto passed the law as part of his campaign promises and to garner support from civil society groups and the population. However, this has not come without criticism from the PAN, Senator Roberto Zuarth has labeled the President's action as a "great irresponsibility" for passing a law that two months later is being modified (El Senado, 2013). Since by publishing it in January, by law it was scheduled to go into effect in February, 30 days after publishing it, and states would have six months to add and incorporate to their laws. As of March 23, 2013, the law is in the Chamber of Deputies waiting analysis and is yet to be seen what other amendments or changes might be made to it.

In response to the first question the second case study addressed: 1) Are Mexican female politicians writing and advocating effective legislation against violence? The answer is mixed. The rate of female politicians that write, advocate, and pass legislation against violence requires more research. Analyzing the LGV, only one woman co-sponsored the initiative, Amira Gricelda Gomez Tueme from the PRI, this shows that women are present in the writing of policies, but clearly more women are needed. Similarly, as previously noted, Gastelum was able

to pass two initiatives specifically dealing with victim's rights out of the seven she presented. The majority of women in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies voted for the passage of the initiative, reflecting that women do support legislation against violence. Responding to the second question the second case study addressed: 2) What are some of the challenges and barriers in passing legislation against violence? The challenges and barriers in passing the LGV legislation include: President Calderon's view of the issue as he vetoed it, the complexities in the use of language of how victims were to be viewed and assisted, the difficulty of implementing the law as different organizations will play a role in responding, and the work ahead of new President Peña Nieto to implement. The following section will further address some of the barriers in passing legislation against violence.

Challenges and Barriers

Case study 1 showed that one Mexican female politician is serving both descriptive and substantive roles in representing her constituents and advocating for women's equal rights. Additionally, case study 2 showed female politician's role in writing and advocating for legislation to assist victims, as well as the complexities and barriers in passing this type of legislation. Together these two case studies show that there is more to passing legislation against violence that goes past issues of gender representation and onto issues of societal and political structures. This section further addresses some challenges in implementing legislation against violence. It includes a brief look at the 2007 General Law to Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV), a look at issues of funding, the response of the international CEDAW committee for non-compliance, and the realities victim's face when denouncing perpetrators of violence.

The many obstacles the General Law for Victims initiative had to go through show just how complex it is to pass any federal law in Mexico to assist victims of violence. It highlights that passing legislation against violence or even services for victims not only takes female politicians taking it as part of their agenda, but also the need to have buy-in and support from other parties, and most importantly support from the President. These obstacles and the fact that Congress has to re-examine the General Law for Victims point to how victims in Mexico are recognized, defined, and the role that gender plays. For example, there is a tendency to recognize women victims of violence as part of the problem, in a 2010 National survey about discrimination in Mexico, 12.4 percent of people “agree” that women are assaulted because they “provoke men or ask for it” (Genero, 2012). Violence in the home is also seen as a private matter to be dealt with within family units, rather than through politics or the authorities. This patriarchal attitude is also reflected as 26 percent of females still ask their partners permission to vote or who to vote for. Similarly, 33 percent of females ask permission of their partner to go out alone and one out of four believes that women’s rights are not respected (Genero, 2012). Meanwhile, female politicians instead of taking the issue straight on, focus more on a broader agenda, as noted with Gastelum’s record, she focuses more on family issues that range from how childcare is provided to the creation of a commission to oversee children’s welfare. However, Gastelum has approached the issue of victims through policies that focus on reforming penal codes for better coordination between the different government structures, and the creation of projects to lower delinquency. In a press conference regarding femicides, Gastelum noted that violence against women is not an issue of victimhood, but rather an issue of justice, justice for women victims of violence, that deserve parity and recognition in the judicial system (Conferencia, 2011).

At the same time, even when a law against violence is passed as was the General Law to Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV) in 2007, challenges in implementation are present. The challenges include: gaps in collaboration between the federal, state, and municipal judicial systems, as well as the way funding is spent. After the passage of LGAMVLV in 2007 it took some states a few more years until finally implementing it into their state legislature. Many states took their time to review and approve LGAMVLV into their constitutions well into 2009. Guanajuato was one of the last states to create the structures necessary to support this law until recently in May 2011. And even to this day various initiatives are presented in the Senate to modify sections of the 2007 law mostly dealing with how language is used and how terms are defined. In terms of funding, a report by CEAMEG notes that in 2008 regional Judicial powers were given \$31 million pesos to comply with LGAMVLV nationally. In 2010 the Chamber of Deputies approved \$48 million pesos for "strategic action" through the formation, investigation, diffusion, action and evaluation to transverse the perspective of gender in the Judicial powers (CEAMEG, 2012). In other words, funding seems to be increasing for LGAMVLV, yet gender violence continues to be a problem. More research exist in how funding is distributed and used, but it is beyond this thesis.

The CEDAW Committee report points to the shortcomings that even though a federal law might be approved, it does take the states time and funding to implement at the local level. The CEDAW committee urges Mexico to "revise its public security strategies", "provide systematic training on human rights to all law enforcement officials, the military, and navy", "establish a standard system for regular collection of statistical data on violence against women", as well as "harmonize" legislation like "civil, penal and procedural laws at the federal and state level", and provide consistent "definitions and sanctions" in the legal framework in all federal, state, and

municipal levels (Convention, 2012, p. 3). At the same time no real international mechanism has been established that can persecute States for noncompliance with LGAMVLV, besides imposing sanctions and international pressure on governments, only recommendations can be made. Amnesty reports continue to record many cases of women experiencing violence in Mexico and how the perpetrators are not being held accountable, prosecuted, and in most cases no follow-up by the authorities exists (Amnesty, 2008). These challenges show how fragile and fluid laws against violence are in Mexico. In a way laws against violence are at the mercy of the current President's view of violence, victim's rights, and available funding. This fluidity in legislation can be good in some cases, as it gives legislators a change to improve previous laws. However, change in a law is not needed when the initial LGAMVLV law has not been fully implemented at the state level, public officials have not been successful in implementing it, and the population has not been fully accustomed to a new law in which violence against women is not tolerated. Showing that combating violence against women go beyond issues of gender representation and onto issues of societal and political structures.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will summarize this thesis; address some recommendations, and offer a conclusion based on the literature reviewed, historical background, and the analysis of the two case studies presented. The summary section will present the statistics on violence against women, the number of female politicians, the literature review, the methods used, and how the case studies relate to the literature. The recommendations section will present a few recommendations for the passage and implementation of policies against violence, the political participation of women, education, and further research. The conclusion section will present the effectiveness of Mexican female politicians and an outlook to the future.

Thesis Summary

Violence against Mexican women is not a new topic as murdered and disappeared women are reported in the news every day. However, the incidence of women that have been victims of violence (67%), the lack of response from the government, the high rank in gender inequality, and the national average of participating female politicians (35%) compared to other nation states, offers an interesting relationship that has been explored in this thesis. In a country where 51% of its population is female, and of those 51% are eligible and registered to vote (INEGI, 2012), brings the questions addressed in this thesis as to the effectiveness of Mexican female politicians.

1. To what extent do women politicians follow party lines and to what extent do women politicians have autonomous agendas?
2. To what extent do women politicians get to participate in policy making and what role do quotas play in female participation?
3. Are Mexican female politicians writing and advocating effective legislation against violence?

4. What are some of the challenges and barriers in passing legislation against violence?

The literature review shows many of the different points of analyzing issues of female political representation. The review of the literature on Mexican female politicians is fragmented as some scholars focus specifically on the role of religion, the underrepresentation of women at the state level, the role gender plays in politics, the representation of Mexican culture in politics, and the role quotas play in the political process. More research is needed on analyzing the types of policies advanced by female politicians, more specifically on policies against violence. The methods used to analyze the effectiveness of female politicians advocating for legislation against violence in this thesis include qualitative and quantitative methods. This methodology has allowed me to view the issue of violence against women and the role of Mexican female politicians play in creating legislation through different perspectives. Using the perspectives from representation and critical mass theory has allowed me to look closer into the roles Mexican female politicians play and how their effectiveness can be categorized or not into these theories. Conceding that more in-depth research is needed as this thesis only analyzes the role of one female politician and one initiative due to time restraints. The first case study presented the work of Senator Gastelum highlighting how descriptive and substantive representation play out in real life, as she balances her work as a female legislator and central part of her party. The second case study presented the LGV initiative, from its creation, presentation, and barriers. The LGV initiative initially failed even though it had support from all of the elected female politicians in Congress, this questions critical mass theory, as something more than numbers is necessary to bring about change. It also shows that passing legislation against violence is more complex and involves other issues that go beyond gender representation as noted in the

challenges and barriers section. The next section offers some recommendations that go beyond issues of gender.

Recommendations

As discussed, Senator Gastelum was shown to be 28 percent effective in passing her initiatives. Most of her failed initiatives can be justified to the complexities of passing legislation. The passage of violence legislation, its effectiveness, and implementation, was shown to be more complex as discussed in the challenges and barriers section. Combating violence against women goes beyond political structures and representation, different fields of study like economics, sociology, philosophy, and marketing must be engaged to combat the problem at different levels. To this end some recommendations to pass legislation against violence and effective implementation should include: 1) Outreach and education to the presiding President and any other influential political figures to garner support of legislation against violence. 2) Enhance laws with adequate funding to make them operable, which also include incentives for states to enact laws. 3) Establish the mechanisms necessary to measure outcomes of laws for improvement. 4) Increase community violence education, awareness, and engagement through social marketing campaigns as well as provide more education and incentives for public officials on the treatment and assistance of victims. 5) Continue to provide training and education to men and women to attract more women to political positions, and engagement with the political system. To influence change on the statistics of violence against women, not only do more women need to be involved in politics, but there also needs to be a significant shift in culture recognizing how violence affects the whole society. It must start with the socialization of children on equal gender roles and engage the younger population on the “promises” of democracy and women as equal. Hope remains as female politicians like Senator

Gastelum continues to push and keeps presenting initiatives in Congress that aim at reaching gender parity. Gastelum recently presented an initiative that challenges the structure of the system and asks that females have equal representation in all committees. Further research is needed, specifically into the areas of legislation against violence, to see what has worked, the barriers, trends, and implementation. As well as more research into the usage of language in legislation and the role Mexican female politicians play in advocating for change at different levels of government to reduce levels of violence against women.

Conclusion

Even though Mexican female politicians have fought and continue to fight against many societal barriers at different levels, they are indeed trying to make a difference through their participation in politics and demands for parity. Conceding that time and research limitations exist at this time, it is difficult to quantify the level of Gastelum's impact or the changes that LGV legislation will bring. Responding to the initial research questions: 1) To what extent do women politicians follow party lines and to what extent do women politicians have autonomous agendas? 2) To what extent do women politicians get to participate in policy making and what role do quotas play in female participation? 3) Are Mexican female politicians writing and advocating effective legislation against violence? 4) What are some of the challenges and barriers in passing legislation against violence? One can observe the effort not only in Gastelum's work but also in Congress as they have address issues of violence and victim's services. In case study one, the work of Senator Diva Gastelum gives visibility to women's issues in society, as her objectives for ONMPRI include women's human rights, gender parity, PRI party inclusion of workplan, and transparency of actions. This relates to the literature that focuses on where to place Mexican women in politics as they struggle for gender parity at many

levels. Gastelum through her initiatives is trying to give a voice to all women by fighting for gender parity and showing that women can be successful politicians. The initiatives Gastelum presented to Congress reflect that she is serving a descriptive and substantive role who wants to help women improve their position in society and politics. Her voting record also reflects similar qualities as she has voted in favor of many social issues that help women. Gastelum serving descriptive and substantive roles is in par with the literature and research by Piscopo and Htun (2010) that show that women in general support “women’s issues”. Gastelum is also demanding that her party shows transparency in fulfilling gender quotas and is a strong supporter of getting women in politics as she serves an important role leading OMNPRI. In case study two, one can observe the role female politicians play in supporting laws against violence and the complexities of passing legislation against violence. Dissecting the steps LGV had to go through, it was evident it was not an easy task. The number of times the initiative had to be presented, modified and supported by different groups clearly shows that more than legislative and civil group support is needed to pass any law. Had it not been for the cooperation of all parties, including women and civil society organizations, it would have not gotten as far as it did, and while in the end it was on hold until the new President supported it, it shows that Congress is more receptive to take on issues of violence, victim’s services, and gender parity.

Overall, even though Mexican female politicians represent 35 percent of the legislature at the national level surpassing the 30 percent needed to reach critical mass. At this time, based on the two case studies, it is unclear whether those Mexican female politicians currently elected can affect or create a change big enough to improve the lives of Mexican women throughout the country, especially around issues of gender violence. This shows that addressing violence is a bigger task than passing and enacting legislation. More research is needed to focus specifically

on the role of Mexican politicians in creating policies against violence, as well as how Mexican women can advance in issues of representation not only at the national level, but state and local levels too. Improving the inequality of Mexican women in their society has to be approached at all levels, including those measured by the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, maybe then the situation will reflect change in the numbers of women victims of violence. The field is open for other scholars to build on and explore not only issues of policy and representation in Mexico, but also investigate what if anything has proven effective in combating gender violence, as well as researching how the different levels measured by the Gender Inequality Index affect change. To this end, a wider conversation is needed that recognizes all the different aspects of Mexican society to create a violence free society that goes beyond issues of gender representation and the political process. The conversation must include the different institutions that make society including the community, businesses, religious institutions, civil society groups, and legislators working together to help Mexican women live a life free of violence.

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